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INTEGRATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

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Introduction

1. At its fifty-sixth session, the Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 2000/46 on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system, referring, inter alia, to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the Beijing Platform for Action, emphasized that the goal of mainstreaming a gender perspective was to achieve gender equality. This included ensuring that all United Nations activities integrate the human rights of women.

2. The Commission welcomed the continued cooperation between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights, including through joint bureau meetings, as well as the cooperation and coordination between the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights aimed at mainstreaming women's human rights.

3. The Commission also requested all human rights treaty bodies, special procedures and other human rights mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights regularly and systematically to take a gender perspective into account in the implementation of their mandates, and to include in their reports information on and qualitative analysis of human rights of women and girls. It encouraged the strengthening of cooperation and coordination in that regard.

4. The present report is submitted in accordance with Commission resolution 2000/46 and summarizes steps that have been taken to integrate gender perspectives fully into the United Nations human rights system. It updates the reports submitted in 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000 on the same issue (E/CN.4/1997/40; E/CN.4/1998/49 and Add.1; E/CN.4/1999/67 and Add.1 and E/CN.4/2000/67). It deals with the concept of gender mainstreaming and considers the most recent steps and initiatives taken by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, treaty monitoring bodies and human rights mechanisms, as well as the Commission on Human Rights, for that purpose.

I. MAINSTREAMING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

5. The Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international human rights instruments assert the fundamental principle of non-discrimination: everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in these instruments, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, birth or status.

6. While the principle of non-discrimination is a widely accepted norm, some aspects of it have proved easier to implement than others. The elimination of discrimination on the ground of sex still remains far from being attained despite gains made generally in the field of human rights. The World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 therefore set as a priority for Governments and the United Nations the achievement of the full and equal enjoyment by women of all human rights.

7. The integration of gender concerns in all aspects of United Nations activities was recommended at all recent global conferences and was given a strong emphasis by the World Conference on Human Rights and the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Fourth World Conference on Women reaffirmed that the human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights and established a number of specific strategic objectives to ensure that women enjoy their full human rights. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action restated and forcefully encouraged gender-sensitive analyses of human rights activity.

8. As stated in the United Nations system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women 1996-2001, which was endorsed in the Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/34, the organizations of the United Nations system committed themselves to promote and to advocate women's full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and to advocate in particular the rights-based approach to the advancement of women in such areas as employment, education, violence against women and health and reproductive rights, as well as in development activities.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

9. This section gives a brief overview of the various recent steps and initiatives undertaken by OHCHR in mainstreaming a gender perspective.

10. OHCHR has organized a series of two-day workshops for its staff. These workshops covered gender concepts and training, the relationship of gender to women's human rights, and the practical application of gender concepts and frameworks to the work of OHCHR at every level.

11. The General Assembly special session, "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-first Century", also known as Beijing + 5, was held in New York from 5 to 9 June 2000. It reviewed, inter alia, examples of good practices, positive actions, lessons learned, and the obstacles and key challenges remaining. It also considered further actions and initiatives for achieving gender equality in the new millennium. A declaration was issued as a renewed commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action.

12. OHCHR submitted a paper entitled "Building on achievements: women's human rights five years after Beijing". The paper reaffirmed basic human rights principles, such as the universality and indivisibility of human rights, the principle of equality and non-discrimination, and also identified some key issues of the human rights of women. Among the key issues identified in the paper were reproductive health rights; gender equality and property, land rights, inheritance; gender equality and the family; and trafficking in women and children.

13. The High Commissioner for Human Rights participated at a panel co-sponsored by the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) on "Building on Beijing: challenges for meeting women's human rights", on 9 June 2000.

14. OHCHR provided examples of best practices in critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action with regard to women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflicts, human rights of women and the girl child.

15. In the framework of the General Assembly Millennium Summit (September 2000), one day of discussion was dedicated to key global issues on gender and rights of women. The United Nations Millennium Women's Summit was co-organized by the Council of Women World Leaders and the United Nations and aimed at providing an opportunity to discuss major issues relating to women in the context of the new millennium. Key issues discussed were peace, security and disarmament; development and poverty eradication; protecting our common environment; good governance, democracy and human rights; and protecting the vulnerable and strengthening the United Nations. The situation of women was considered under each of these items and specific recommendations relevant to women were adopted.

16. OHCHR issued a special edition of its human rights review focusing on women's rights and reviewing OHCHR activities relating to women's human rights and gender integration.

17. Cooperation between DAW and OHCHR is being maintained. In that regard, a joint work plan for the Division and the Office has been agreed upon and submitted to both the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights.

18. DAW, UNIFEM and OHCHR co-sponsored an expert group meeting on "Gender and racial discrimination" in Zagreb from 21 to 24 November 2000. The results of the meeting will be made available to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fifth session in March 2001.

19. OHCHR collaborated with DAW in the organization of an expert group meeting on "The HIV/AIDS pandemic and its gender implications" held in Windhoek, Namibia, from 13 to 17 November 2000. The objective of the meeting was to contribute to a better understanding of the interplay between gender and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The results of the meeting included a set of recommendations for the consideration of the Commission on the Status of Women.

20. In the field, OHCHR has stepped up efforts to focus activities on the rights of women and integrate the gender perspective, in accordance with the mission aims and strategic projects for 1999-2001.

21. Under the Assist Community Together (ACT) project, the NGO, "Initiative de developpement de l'entrepreneuriat féminin", received financial support in the amount of US$ 3,000 to implement a human rights education project for the advancement of women in outlying districts of the city of Kinshasa.

22. OHCHR has developed an anti-trafficking programme focusing on legal and policy reform and undertakes a range of catalytic activities and interventions aimed at ensuring the integration of a human rights perspective into national, regional and international anti-trafficking initiatives. OHCHR work in the area of trafficking is based on two fundamental principles: first, that human rights must be at the core of any credible anti-trafficking strategy; and second,

that such strategies must be developed and implemented from the perspective of those who most need to have their human rights protected and promoted (see E/CN.4/2000/72). In August 2000, OHCHR has prepared a position paper on trafficking in persons, with focus on women and children.

III. STEPS TAKEN BY HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODIES AND BY HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS AND PROCEDURES

A. Human rights treaty bodies

23. With regard to steps taken by the various human rights treaty bodies, a more comprehensive list of activities, as well as an assessment of activities, was included in the reports submitted to the Commission at its fifty-third, fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions (E/CN.4/1997/40, E/CN.4/1998/49 and Add.1 and E/CN.4/1999/67). In the year under review, the following new developments regarding gender integration in the activities of treaty monitoring bodies are to be noted.

Committee on the Rights of the Child

24. The Committee on the Rights of the Child continued to give significant attention to gender issues in its work and continued to raise systematically issues of gender discrimination and the human rights of girls in its examination of reports presented by States parties on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among other recommendations, the Committee has included in its concluding observations recommendations concerning general issues of gender discrimination, early marriage and pregnancy, harmful traditional practices, sexual abuse and exploitation, the greater vulnerability of girls to HIV infection, etc. In addition, the Committee has also identified some States parties in which, in spite of persistent general patterns of discrimination affecting girls, boys also suffer from the discriminatory effect of gender-socialization patterns that can result, for example, in academic underperformance.

Committee against Torture

25. The Committee has recently appointed its first woman member. This new member, who has also been designated the Committee's focal point for gender issues, has been pushing hard for the Committee to develop a more sensitive approach to gender-based forms of torture, with some success. Consequently, her membership of the Committee has a gender impact that goes well beyond the symbolism of numbers. On 14 November 2000, she briefed the Committee about recent developments relating to gender at the international level and she was asked to expand on her preliminary findings at the Committee's next session, in May 2001.

Human Rights Committee

26. The Human Rights Committee adopted a new general comment (No. 28) on article 3, which concerns gender equality, in March 2000.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

27. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination adopted General Recommendation 25 on gender-related dimensions of racial discrimination, at its fifty-sixth session, in March 2000.

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

28. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has also consistently addressed the issue of gender discrimination in its work, both in the context of the reporting procedure (particularly under articles 3 (equal treatment of men and women) and 10 (protection of the family, mothers, and children) of the Covenant, but generally under most articles of the Covenant) and in its general comments. In General Comment No. 14 on the right to health, which was adopted in May 2000, the Committee expressly addresses the gender perspective with respect to the right to health, as well as women's right to health.

Participation of women in human rights treaty bodies

29. The composition of the bodies established under the international human rights instruments must be considered as an indicator of the advancement of women within the United Nations system. The Committee against Torture has one woman member. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is composed solely of women. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has 2 women among its 18 members. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is composed of 18 members, of whom 2 are women. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has 7 women among its 10 members and the Human Rights Committee has 2 women among its 18 members.

B. Human rights mechanisms and procedures

30. The special procedures and mechanisms have also been encouraged to integrate a gender perspective into their work. Each year, resolutions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council have encouraged and requested the special rapporteurs/representatives, experts and working groups to include in their reports gender-disaggregated data, to address the characteristics and practices of human rights violations that are specifically or primarily directed against women or to which women are particularly vulnerable, and to enhance cooperation and exchange information among themselves and with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

31. This process is an ongoing one. Some - but not all - of the special procedures have been specifically requested by the Commission on Human Rights to ensure that gender considerations are fully reflected in their work.

32. Special rapporteurs have increasingly tended to examine the question of the enjoyment by women of their rights. They do not all give this matter equal attention: not all reports are gender specific, information is not always disaggregated by sex and in cases there is a lack of

understanding of the relevance of gender. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that there is an encouraging trend towards integrating women's rights into the study of the subjects of many of the mandates.

33. A number of special procedures and mechanisms have, in their reports, either included a specific section on women or have identified specific issues which have a particular impact on women's enjoyment of their rights.

34. In examining the reports submitted in 2000 by country and thematic rapporteurs, common concerns and conclusions can be noted. Most of the special rapporteurs referred to gender-based human rights violations with regard to equal access to education, literacy, access to health services, access to property, the right to inherit and participation in decision-making processes, as well as the persistence of harmful traditional practices. The problem most often mentioned is gender-based violence, in particular so-called "crimes of honour". Women are used as targets in various types of conflicts and are subjected to various types of violence: they are raped, sexually abused, beaten, tortured and killed. This violence reflects the low status of women in the societies concerned and their particular vulnerability.

35. The special rapporteurs are increasingly analysing the situation of women vis-à-vis the enjoyment of their rights, demonstrating sensitivity to gender-based violations and reporting them more systematically.

36. In her report on the situation of human rights in Somalia (E/CN.4/2000/110) the independent expert noted many allegations of rape and other forms of sexual violence. In Somaliland, human rights defenders had reported many cases of sexual abuse of women and children, particularly among the internally displaced population.

37. In his report for 2000 on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 (E/CN.4/2000/25), the Special Rapporteur devoted a section to the situation of children, women and the family. He mentioned that harsh prison sentences that take fathers away from children and violence that often occurs after release affect the image and protective role of the breadwinner, resulting in mothers taking on an additional burden and acquiring roles other than the traditional ones.

38. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan in his report to the Commission in 2000 (E/CN.4/2000/33), made a link between the devastated economy of the country, the continued deprivation of social and economic rights and the deterioration in the situation of the rights of women.

39. Basic health indicators reflect the worsening health situation of Afghan women and children. Afghanistan has the second highest maternal mortality rate in the world. Every day about 45 women die of pregnancy-related causes, resulting in over 16,000 maternal deaths annually. Tuberculosis rates for women are among the highest in the world. There are approximately 133,000 persons with tuberculosis, 70 per cent of whom are females aged between 15 and 45. The health situation of women and girls is further aggravated by the complete segregation in the provision of health services to males and females. This has

enormously curtailed women's access to these services, especially when there are only a very small number of female doctors and trained nurses are practising, under severe restrictions, in hospitals.

40. In the education sector the Special Rapporteur noted the discriminatory policies banning access of female students to all levels of education in Afghanistan (see E/CN.4/2000/33).

41. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burundi reported (E/CN.4/2000/34) that although the legislation in force does not discriminate specifically against women, economic problems and the burden of tradition have relegated women to a position of inferiority. Yet, they represent 52 per cent of the Burundian population and many of them have become heads of household because of the war. Women are subjected to discrimination in politics and education, for example, no women participated in the Arusha negotiations. Women are well represented in primary education (currently, 38 per cent of secondary school students are girls), but they account for only 23 per cent of the university student population. He noted that women enjoy no rights of succession and that they cannot own property or even enjoy the goods produced by their own labour. Some go into prostitution because of poverty. In prisons, the lack of separation between male and female inmates encourages rape.

42. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar in his 1999 report (E/CN.4/1999/29) identified some of the problems that affect women and children in particular Myanmar and expressed his concern over the situation. Because rape and abuses are a regular feature of the army's mode of operation in its incursions into the insurgency zones or in the relocation sites, women and children continue to seek refuge within and outside the country. Many women are reported to fall through the safety net of refugee camps along the borders and into the hands of traffickers or become victims of other forms of exploitation. Recent reports received by the Special Rapporteur indicate that such abuses and their consequences afflict women from several ethnic groups in general and the Rohingyas in particular.

43. In Bosnia and Herzegovina (E/CN.4/2000/39), trafficking of persons for the purpose of forced prostitution has emerged as a major human rights concern. Local police have tended to focus more on offences allegedly committed by women than on offences committed against them. Despite the failure to adopt adequate legislation including criminal law provisions to address trafficking, there has been some progress with regard to State responsibility. Authorities at the State level have indicated their willingness to address some aspects of victim protection, including the provision of shelter. Local non-governmental organizations have also shown willingness to provide services for the protection of victims.

44. In his report to the Commission in 2000 (E/CN.4/2000/35), the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran recalled that, starting modestly in 1991, the Bureau of Women's Affairs in the Office of the President had developed a number of programmes with the declared objective of realizing social justice and the advancement of women. In 1997, the first National Plan of Action for Women was published as part of an effort to "mainstream women's concerns in the national planning process". The objective was "a balanced gender perspective within the framework of Islamic principles". A report on the Plan of Action had analysed results in 12 areas, including "obstacles faced and lessons learned", among them the unwillingness of certain parents to permit their daughters to have vocational or

technical training; the policy of privatizing of health services, which prevents early detection of disease; the lack of proper records on violence against women; strong patriarchal attitudes in society; and the limited access to financial resources that impedes women from running for elected office. In a section entitled "Human rights of women", the report notes the inadequate awareness of women of their legal rights, the lack of strong mechanisms for promoting the human rights of women and the "improper" enforcement of laws.

45. The Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, in a section of her report (E/CN.4/2000/3) on violations of the right to life of women, stated that she had taken action on behalf of 57 identified women. The Special Rapporteur transmitted urgent appeals on behalf of 25 women to the Governments of Chile, China, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey and the United Kingdom. In addition, the Special Rapporteur transmitted allegations of 33 cases of violations of the right to life of women, said to have occurred in Bangladesh, Chile, China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Rwanda and Sri Lanka.

46. The Special Rapporteur has continued to receive reports of so-called "honour killings" of women. The perpetrators of these crimes are mostly male family members of the murdered women, who go unpunished or receive reduced sentences on the justification of having murdered to defend their misconceived notion of "family honour". The Special Rapporteur is working closely with the special rapporteurs on violence against women, its causes and consequences and on the independence of judges and lawyers to monitor incidents of "honour killings" where the State either approves of and supports these acts, or extends a form of impunity to the perpetrators by giving tacit or covert support to the practice.

47. "Honour killings" take many forms. In some cases, young girls and women have been forced to commit suicide after public denunciation of their behaviour and open threats to their lives. Others are disfigured by acid burns; many of these women die as a result of their injuries. Such cowardly crimes against women are publicly and proudly confessed by the perpetrators, who are often family members of the victims. Only a handful of the perpetrators are arrested and most of these criminals receive only token punishment. The law also allows the heirs of the victims to forgive the accused or accept compensation (diyat) in place of imprisonment. In almost 90 per cent of such cases, the victims are killed by their own family or at their behest.

48. The Special Rapporteur noted that, despite their international legal obligations, some countries retain legislation allowing for reduction of sentences and exemption from prosecution for those who kill in the name of honour.

49. When studying reports on this issue, the Special Rapporteur recorded that she was deeply troubled to read judgement upon judgement moralizing about the conduct of the victims of "honour killings", while justifying acts of murder by the very people who would be expected to feel love for and closeness to the women they kill. The Special Rapporteur is also concerned at the policy adopted by some Governments to protect potential victims of "honour killings". While those threatening the lives of these women enjoy total freedom, the victims are placed in prisons or custodial and correctional homes, sometimes for years on end. They are not free to leave these institutions once confined to them.

50. With respect to cases of "honour killing" considered by the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers expressed his concern in regard to these instances of summary execution and urged the Governments concerned to bring those responsible to justice. Further, the Special Rapporteur reminded the Governments of their responsibility under international law to prevent, to investigate and to punish human rights violations (see E/CN.4/2000/61).

51. In the context of a workshop on gender integration in the human rights system co-organized by OHCHR, DAW and UNIFEM from 26 to 28 May 1999, the Special Rapporteur on toxic wastes noted that women as a group are particularly exposed to the adverse effects of toxic products and dangerous waste on the right to life, the right to health, the right to an adequate living standard, the right to development, the right to work, the right to participation, the right to freedom of expression and assembly, the right to information and other fundamental rights.

52. The Special Rapporteur noted a disturbing discrepancy between recognition of the decisive role played by women in promoting sustainable development and the place they occupied in practice. Women's organizations throughout the world have clearly played a leading role in promoting environmental awareness, while women play a critical role in the management, use and protection of natural resources and in environmental education.

53. The independent expert on extreme poverty has considered the need to adopt special measures to help extremely poor women, in particular old women. She recommended in her report to the Commission 2000 (E/CN.4/2000/52) that the situation of extremely poor women should be taken into consideration in the areas of: employment and re-employment, minimum income, the World Bank and social funds, the situation of persons without documents, etc. Several measures could be of direct benefit to these women: an organized and effective campaign against the traffic in human beings, including the sale of organs; the prosecution of prostitution networks; recourse to microcredit; and support for women in prison or having contact with the forces of law and order. The recruitment of women police officers could be a useful means of encouraging a preventive rather than a repressive attitude towards extremely poor women.

54. The Special Rapporteur on education has noted in all her previous reports the constantly increasing attention to girls' access to and persistence in schooling and will review recent developments in her 2001 report. She deems it necessary to move beyond availability and accessibility, and has chosen to focus on pregnancy as a disciplinary offence. The practice of defining pregnancy as a disciplinary offence routinely leads to the expulsion of the pregnant girl from school, sometimes precluding her from continuing education. The lack of access to information that would have enabled the girl to make any choice, least of all an informed one, is usually the background to this practice. The frequent clash between societal norms which pressurize girls into early pregnancy and legal norms which aim to keep them in school makes this phenomenon difficult to tackle. The Special Rapporteur regrets that information about the definition of pregnancy as a disciplinary offence leading to expulsion from school is fragmentary.

55. The Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, in her report to the Commission in 2000 (E/CN.4/2000/82), underlined the importance of addressing the problem of violence against women migrant workers as a vulnerable group. Owing to their double marginalization as women and as migrants, women migrant workers may easily find themselves in situations in which they are vulnerable to violence and abuse, both at home and at work. Women migrant workers dominate the informal labour market of most countries, working as domestic, industrial or agricultural labour or in the service sector. Both women who have been the victims of trafficking and those who migrate voluntarily may end up in situations of exploitation, violence and abuse. The exchange of sexual favours for permission to transit, which is common practice on some frontiers, is also a form of gender-based harassment to which migrant women are often subjected. The kinds of abuse and violence suffered by women migrant workers include the withholding of their wages, acts of physical and sexual violence, undernourishment, the seizure of their passports, and lack of medical and health care. There are today about 130 million international or "non-national" migrants in the world. Women account for 50 per cent of this figure, although country statistics are regrettably scarce and take virtually no account of those without the necessary documentation. An estimated 30 million people come into the latter category, and women account for an increasing number of them.

56. In his report to the Commission in 2000 (E/CN.4/2000/83), the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons reaffirmed the particular needs of internally displaced women and children, who constitute the majority of internally displaced populations. More systematic and in-depth attention to the special needs of women and children and to strategies for addressing such concerns is required. To this end, sessions of the regional workshops and seminars on internal displacement are being devoted to the special needs of internally displaced women and children. Another important initiative was the Expert Meeting on Gender Dimensions of Internal Displacement hosted by UNICEF in New York in June 1999, in which the office of the Representative participated.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

57. At its fifty-sixth session, the Commission on Human Rights adopted resolutions relating to traffic in women and girls (2000/44), the elimination of violence against women (2000/45), integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system (2000/46) and violence against women migrant workers (2000/54). For the first time, the Commission also adopted a resolution specifically relating to women's equal ownership of, access to and control over land and the equal rights to own property and to adequate housing (2000/13).

58. In other resolutions, including those on migrants; torture; extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; racism; extreme poverty, freedom of opinion and expression; the implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief; and the rights of the child, the Commission made specific reference to gender mainstreaming and/or violations of the human rights of women and called for measures to combat these problems.

59. Also at its fifty-sixth session, the Commission voiced particular concern regarding violations of women's rights in specific countries, including Afghanistan, Rwanda, Myanmar, Sierra Leone and the Sudan.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

60. All Governments should ratify, without reservations, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Action should be taken to change existing or introduce new legislation in order to ensure protection of the human rights of women and to acknowledge the principle of gender equality as the basis for laws and practices which will promote women's concerns. States should regularly review reservations with a view to withdrawing them.

61. The obligations of States to prevent and redress violations of women's rights need to be further clarified. Women's different life experiences, both in private and in public life, such as in employment, education and political life, should be assessed more explicitly in order to identify obstacles to the enjoyment of their rights. In this regard, treaty bodies have an opportunity to clarify States parties' obligations to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the human rights of all. Specific recommendations were included in the report on this subject submitted to the 1999 session of the Commission (E/CN.4/1999/67).

62. The report of the expert group meeting on the development of guidelines for the integration of gender perspectives into human rights activities and programmes, held in 1995, contains a wide range of recommendations (see E/CN.4/1996/105, para. 71). As the present report shows, progress in implementing those recommendations has been made. However, many of them are still relevant.